

The Leverton Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	115279
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	379054
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2012
Lead inspector	Tusha Chakraborti

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adrian Platts
Headteacher	Isobel Barron
Date of previous school inspection	27 April 2009
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Age group	3–7
Inspection date(s)	20–21 March 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Tusha Chakraborti

Additional inspector

Bimla Thakur

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 13 lessons taught by seven teachers. They heard children reading, scrutinised pupils' work, visited assemblies and undertook other activities in order to observe pupils' learning. Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff and pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at school evaluation documents, safeguarding documentation, data on pupils' progress, development planning and minutes of meetings held by the governing body. Responses from questionnaires completed by 53 parents and carers were analysed, as well as those from 22 staff.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized school. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average but, of these, an increasing number are at the early stages of learning English. A significant number of pupils join the school part-way through the academic year. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Nursery and the Reception classes. The school holds awards for Investors in People, International Schools and Activemark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is a harmonious community where pupils grow up as confident learners. Its inclusive ethos ensures that all pupils feel safe and secure. The school is not outstanding because the quality of teaching does not ensure that all groups of pupils make outstanding progress.
- Achievement is good. All groups of pupils make good progress through the school and leave Year 2 with attainment that is broadly average, although it is better in reading and mathematics than in writing.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work, and motivate them to learn through well-planned activities. However, the more-able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. As a result, they do not always achieve the standards of which they are capable. While marking of pupils' work is regular, teachers' comments do not always explain to pupils how to improve their learning by including the next step.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils behave well in lessons so that learning is not disrupted. They have good attitudes to learning and develop as responsible and independent learners. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Good leadership and management ensure that the self-evaluation is accurate. The leadership of teaching and management of performance are good. The rigorous monitoring, supported by good professional development opportunities, is driving improvement across the school. The governing body is well organised and involved in all aspects of the school's work. Governors are ambitious for the school to do well and are committed to using their expertise for the good of the school.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching by ensuring that:
 - the tasks set in lessons challenge all pupils fully, especially the more able
 - marking consistently shows pupils how they can improve their work, and that they subsequently have time to act upon the guidance.

- Raise attainment in writing by giving pupils clear guidance on how to improve their handwriting and punctuation skills.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are rightly pleased with their children's achievement. Their views are clearly reflected in their comments, such as, 'I am very pleased with the school', 'My child is very happy at school' and, 'My children have always been happy here and I am very happy with their progress in their learning.'

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage start in the Nursery with skills below those expected for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy. A welcoming learning environment, a good range of resources and careful monitoring of progress help children to make good progress and to achieve average standards by the time they move to Year 1. Outdoor areas are spacious and well-resourced to stimulate children's interest and enjoyment of learning. Children were observed in the Nursery to enjoy looking at and discussing the growth of plants in the garden that they had planted.

A significant number of pupils leave or join part-way through Key Stage 1. This mobility depresses overall attainment, particularly as a move of school has a disruptive impact on some pupils' education. Nonetheless, pupils make good progress through their time in Key Stage 1. Their attainment overall is average. To address the lower attainment of those who join the school after the start of Key Stage 1 and any who need extra help with their learning, the school has introduced several intervention programmes with a strong focus on teaching phonics and mathematical skills. These have made a positive impact on pupils' achievement over the past year. Pupils' performance in lessons and the school's current assessment data show that pupils are making accelerated progress and their achievement is rising. They develop a love of books and read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction. Many are fluent readers and are confident in reviewing the events and characters from the books they read, explaining why they chose them. Pupils at the early stages of learning English, as well as the disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress as a result of the well-targeted support they receive from all staff.

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Pupils enjoy paired discussions and group work to spark ideas off each other and extend their learning while writing for different purposes. They build successfully on the knowledge they gain from other subjects. For example, Year 2 pupils, having discussed some geographical and cultural aspects of India, wrote acrostic poems on an Indian 'sari', using a range of descriptive words that they learnt earlier. They use their computer skills well for supporting their learning in other subjects, for example in literacy and art.

Quality of teaching

Almost all parents and carers justifiably feel that teaching is good and report that the 'teachers are credit to the school' and work well together as a team to provide a positive learning environment for all pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They engage pupils well in their learning through effective questioning, and successfully build on their prior learning. They plan well, usually matching work to the learning needs of all groups of pupils. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to extend the skills and understanding of the more-able pupils through sufficiently challenging tasks. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to share the purpose of lessons. Success criteria are provided to ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn and are able to evaluate their learning. Marking of pupils' work does not always guide pupils effectively enough about how to improve it, especially their handwriting and punctuation. Pupils are not always given time to respond to the guidance they are given.

Current planning for topic work ensures a good range of activities across different subjects and this is now enabling pupils to make steady progress in developing reading, writing, mathematics and communication skills across the curriculum. Teachers promote pupils' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well through topic work and class discussions on the religious and cultural diversity around the world. For example, pupils are given opportunities to read stories from different cultures and they learn to value different cultural traditions. Reading is taught well throughout the school, resulting in confident readers of all ages. Teaching assistants provide effective support for all groups of pupils, especially for the disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs as well as those who are at the early stages of learning English.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from good teaching. Staff provide a welcoming environment where children become confident in pursuing indoor and outdoor activities that match their own interests as well as those directed by adults. For example, in Reception, children explored the signs of early spring during their outdoor session and wrote their own account independently in class. Regular teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) supports children well in rapidly developing their literacy skills.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

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Pupils' behaviour is good. Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaires stated that behaviour is good and their children feel safe at school at all times. Pupils confirm this view and report that they can get on well with learning without disruption. They are courteous, cooperative and develop good attitudes to learning. They listen to adults and to each other and respect the views of others. Pupils say that bullying of any kind is extremely rare and comment that when it does happen the school responds very quickly and successfully. As a result, they feel totally safe and secure.

Pupils develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They understand the risks they face in their everyday lives; for example, they are well aware of cyber-bullying and risks from fire, and know what to do if they should encounter them. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their consideration and support for others. As one pupil explained, 'I want everyone to be helpful and kind to each other because, otherwise, the whole world would be sad.' Pupils have a clear understanding of what is right or wrong and this has a positive impact on their behaviour and the inclusive ethos of the school. Pupils take on roles of responsibility within the class, through their school council work and fundraising activities. The school council representatives, known as 'Jedi Knights', are elected by their peers and successfully carry out their duties and support younger children. Children in the reception class demonstrate very positive behaviour and support each other effectively, for example by working in groups and helping each other in activities such as the observational drawing of daffodils. Attendance is average.

Leadership and management

The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement, as is illustrated by the sustained standards of attainment that pupils achieve, starting with below the expected level skills. The senior leaders have a clear and ambitious vision which drives the school forward. They have a systematic programme for the monitoring of teaching and for staff development, by which they develop the expertise of teachers and consistently raise pupils' achievement. Assessment procedures have been strengthened to track pupils' progress more effectively and to promote a more rigorous self- and peer-assessment system. Accurate self-evaluation successfully informs the school's priorities for improvement planning. The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's performance and provides good support and appropriate challenge.

The curriculum has a strong focus on the development of literacy, numeracy and independent learning skills across the curriculum. Several intervention strategies have been introduced to accelerate progress for all groups of pupils, including those who join the school part-way through Key Stage 1. Good cross-curricular planning provides effective links between literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology, and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Assemblies and religious studies, along with the music programme, help pupils to reflect on the connections between spirituality and action

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in their own lives. The personal, social and health education programme promotes pupils' understanding of right and wrong and their ability to make appropriate choices. A good range of enrichment activities, such as visitors from local churches as well as visits to local sites of historical and religious interest, broaden the curriculum.

The school is highly committed to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination through sustaining improvement in the performance of different groups of pupils. The school has clear robust policies and procedures to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of pupils and these are monitored regularly. Risk assessments are well developed and careful checks are made of the suitability of adults to work with children. The school has good partnerships with parents and carers, engaging them successfully in their children's learning.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Leverton Infant and Nursery School, Waltham Abbey, EN9 3BE

Thank you for making us so welcome and for talking to us about your work. We enjoyed visiting your lessons and looking at your work. We are pleased to see that you enjoy coming to school and carry out your duties responsibly, including your jobs as 'Jedi Knights'. Thank you for meeting us and sharing your views with us.

You go to a good school. It is run well and the teaching is good. As a result, you make good progress in lessons and reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. You behave well and you look after each other in lessons and on the playground. We found that the adults in your school look after you very well and keep you safe.

We have identified some areas to help your school to do even better. These have already been recognised by your headteacher and her team, and they have already begun to tackle them. To improve your school further, we have asked your headteacher and governors to:

- make sure that the work provided for you is just a bit harder to move your learning forward as rapidly as possible, especially for those of you who find the work easy
- ensure that teachers always help you to improve your handwriting and punctuation skills.

You already make a good contribution to the life of the school. You can help to improve it even further by continuing to work hard, and by taking extra care with your handwriting and punctuation.

Yours sincerely

Tusha Chakraborti
Lead inspector

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